

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-10 NIC-01 COME-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 01283

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO, FR

SUBJECT: PARIS VISIT OF PORTUGUESE FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: PARIS 1212

1. QUAI SOUTHERN EUROPE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GELADE WHILE COMMENTING ON PORTUGUESE POLITICAL SITUATION (REFTEL) JANUARY 15 BRIEFED EMBOFF ON PORTUGUESE FOREIGN MINISTER MARIO SOARES' CALL ON PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING JANUARY 8. GELADE NOTED THAT SOARES HAD REQUESTED THIS MEETING, WHICH GISCARD HAD AGREED TO ON VERY SHORT NOTICE. GELADE BELIEVES THAT IN ADDITION TO DESIRING GIVING GOF FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ON PORTUGUESE SITUATION, SOARES WAS MOTIVATED BY DESIRE INCLUD VISIT TO FRIENDLY WESTERN CAPITAL AT CONCLUSION OF HIS TRIP TO INDIA, USSR AND YUGOSLAVIA. EMPHASIZING THAT HE HAD ONLY THIRD-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF GISCARD-SOARES CONVERSATION, GELADE GAVE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF CONVERSATION WHICH HE SAID CONCERNED PRIMARILY PORTUGUESE DOMESTIC POLITICS.

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2. SOARES ASKED GISCARD FOR FRANCE TO SUPPORT

"PURALISTIC DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL" BUT NEITHER REQUESTED NOR RECEIVED ANY SPECIFIC TOKEN OF SUCH SUPPORT. ACCORDING TO GELADE, SOARES EMPHASIZED THAT HIS OWN POLITICAL POSITION WAS NEITHER THAT OF "SOCIAL DEMOCRAT", NOR PARTISAN OF COMMON PROGRAM WITH COMMUNISTS. HE CLEARLY DISTANCED HIMSELF FROM PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) WHICH HE SAID HAD FEW SUPPORTERS, CONFINED PRIMARILY TO LISBON INDUSTRIAL AREA, AND FOLLOWED LINE HOSTILE TO HIS OWN PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP). SOARES INDICATED PCP ACTIVELY ATTEMPTING INFILTRATE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) AND IS SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM AFM. SOARES ILLUSTRATED THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH FACT PCP HAD URGED THAT AFM RESERVE FOR ITSELF 20 PER CENT OF SEATS IN NEXT LEGISLATURE, WHICH AFM REFUSED. SOARES ADDED THAT PCP IS NOW HOPING TO DELAY ELECTIONS, REALIZING THAT ITS AGGRESSIVE TACTICS HAVE FRIGHTENED PORTUGUESE ELECTORS AWAY FROM SUPPORTING PCP. HE QUOTED RECENT PUBLIC OPINION SAMPLING GIVING PCP ONLY 7 PER CENT IF ELECTIONS HELD NOW.

3. CONCERNING HIS MOSCOW VISIT, SOARES TOLD GISCARD THAT HE WANTED TO KNOW WHERE SOVIETS STOOD REGARDING PORTUGAL. SOARES HAD TOLD GROMYKO PORTUGAL WOULD STAY IN NATO, THOUGH IT WOULD HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH USSR; GROMYKO HAD NOT REACTED. SOARES TOLD GISCARD HE HAD LEFT MOSCOW WITH IMPRESSION THAT SOVIETS WERE DIVIDED ON HOW TO COMPORT THEMSELVES VIS-A-VIS PORTUGAL. SOME IN SOVIET GOVERNMENT FAVOR SUPPORT FOR PCP, WHILE OTHERS PREFER WAITING, SOARES CONCLUDED.

4. SOARES TOLD GISCARD USG DID NOT WANT TO TAKE FIRM POSITION PRIOR TO PORTUGUESE ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH WASHINGTON PREPARED GIVE IMPORTANT ECONOMIC AID. SOARES HOPED EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WOULD FURTHER TIGHTEN BONDS LINKING IT TO PORTUGAL AND WOULD ASSIST NASCENT PORTUGUESE INDUSTRY. GISCARD, WITHOUT COMMITTING HIMSELF SPECIFICALLY, GAVE SOARES
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ASSURANCES OF FRANCE'S ESTEEM FOR PORTUGAL. HE CONGRATULATED LISBON ON ITS DECOLONIZATION POLICY, AND PAID HOMAGE TO PORTUGUESE EMIGRE WORKERS IN FRANCE. FINALLY, GISCARD INVITED PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT TO MAKE OFFICIAL VISIT IN FRANCE AT A DATE TO BE MUTUALLY AGREED UPON.
RUSH

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